مطبوعات الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة
معهد الدراسات الشرقية
الرسالة الأولى

فى نسب الخلفاء الفاطميين

أسماء الأئمة المستورين كما وردت
فى كتاب أرسله المهدى عبد الله إلى ناحية اليمن

تقديم

حسين بن فيض الله الهمدانى

تصدير

بايرد دودج

رئيس الشرف للجامعة الأمريكية ببيروت

القاهرة

١٩٥٨

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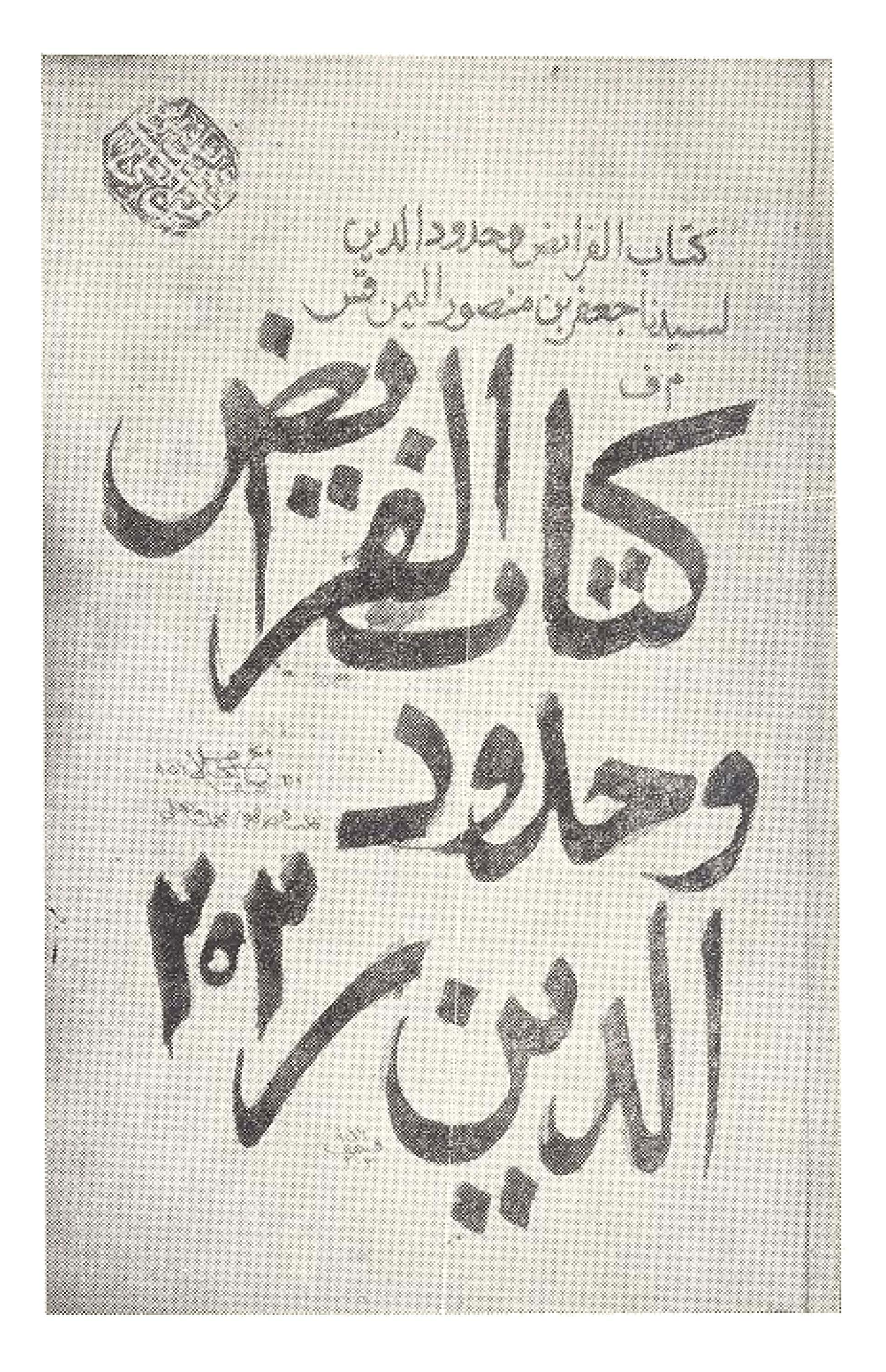
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مصور من النسخة الخطية من كتاب الفرائض وحدود الدين
بمكتبتنا المحمدية الهمدانية

في التأويل في سابع النطقاء وقال الله عز وجل قضى اجلا واجل
مسمى عنده واجل كما ان اظهر ناطقا وناطق اخر عنده الزيادة
فيه ولم يقضها بظهوره وفي مثل ذلك وان الذين يمارون
في الساعة لفي شقاق بعيد يعني بالساعة ظهور المهدي
سابع النطقاء فوجب بظهوره يوجب مقام الوصي والائمة
من بعده بالوصايا حتى ينتهي امرهم اليه صلى الله عليه وعليهم
اجمعين فلذلك لا ينفع الايمان بالتنزيل الا بالايمان
بالتاويل لا ينفع طاعة الناطق الا بتمامها بطاعة الوصي
لان الاعمال بخواتيمها ولله عاقبة الامور فهذا اخر هذه
الابيات واخر شرحنا والحمد لله رب العالمين وصلى الله على
النبي والصفوة من اله وسلم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ورد هذا المعنى
المشروح في كتاب بلالي الى ناحيتنا باليمن من مولانا الامام
عبد الله امير المومنين صلوات الله عليه بعد نزوله في
المهدية المباركة لما اشتدت المحنة وعظمت التقية في ايام
جعفر بن محمد صلوات الله عليه لكتما سر الامام من ولده
تقية عليه فلم يطلع عليه في حيوة جعفر بن محمد ولا بعد
وفاته صح الا اوثق الثقاة من شيعته وكان يقول التقية

ديني ودين ابائي ومن لا تقية له فلا دين له فعلق
كل فرقة من الشيعة بواحد من اربعة من ولد جعفر
بن محمد وهم موسى واسمعيل ومحمد وعبد الله وكل
منهم على غير عقد ممن كان منه وكان صاحب الحق منهم عبد
الله بن جعفر صلوات الله عليه ولم يكن علم مقامه الا عند
الابواب والثقاة تقية عليه وقد تعلق به قوم غير هذه
المشيعة توقيا منهم فلما اراد الائمة من ولد جعفر احياء
دعوة الحق خافوا من نفاق المنافقين فتسموا صلى الله
عليهم بغير اسمائهم وجعلوا اسماءهم التي عرفوا في مقام
الحجب وتسموا بمبارك وميمون وسعيد للفال الحسن في
هذه الاسماء واشاروا بالامامة الى عبد الله وسموه باسمعيل
ودعوا الى المهدي صلع باسم محمد بن اسمعيل اذ محمد
وهو من ولد عبد الله الذي سمي باسمعيل فما فوق جماعة
من دعى فذكروا اسمعيل ومحمد بن اسمعيل وهما لا يوجدان
واصحاب الحق ساكتون امنون فكان كلما قام منهم امام
سمي محمدا والاشارة في الدعوة الى محمد بن اسمعيل والمراد
باسمعيل عبد الله والمراد بمحمد كل من كان في عصره الى
ان يظهر صاحب الظهور وهو محمد فتزول التقية والامر

منتظر بعد الستر فقال مولانا صلوات الله عليه في كتابه
حين ذكر هذا المعنى في التقية من الأسماء قال وجعل الله
في ذلك خيراً كثيراً فكان الإمام عبد الله بن جعفر ثم بعده عبد
الله بن عبد الله ثم احمد بن عبد الله ثم محمد بن احمد فكل
هؤلاء تسمى محمد محمد خلا عبد الله بن جعفر فانه تسمى
باسمعيل فهكذا قال مولانا صلع في كتابه فكان من ذكرنا
من محمد بن احمد صلوات الله عليه تستر بسائر الأسماء ولهم
محمد ابن محمد فجعلوا عند المؤمنين اشارة وعبرة وتذكرة
الى وقت ظهور هذا البيان ثم اوصى محمد بن احمد الى ابن
اخيه واعطاه باشتماله بعده امره طرا وتسمى سعيد بن الحسين
جرت الدعوة اليه ولما بعد ذلك فلما اظهر اظهر مقامه و
اظهر اسم عبد الله فهو مولانا عبد الله الامام صلى الله عليه
وظهر معه مولانا ابو القاسم صلوات الله عليهما اسمه
محمد فصح الاشارة الى القائم المهدي محمد بن عبد الله
ابي القاسم الامام المنتظر لعز دولة الدين والجهاد باولياء
المؤمنين فكتب مولانا عبد الله صلى الله عليه بمعنى هذا
الشرح ولكنه لم يحفظ على انتظام الكلام على النسق ثم
نسب نفسه فقال وانا الآن يعني نفسه علي ابن الحسين
ابن

بن علي بن احمد بن عبد الله بن عبد الله ثانياً بن جعفر
بن محمد بن علي بن الحسين بن علي صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين
واسم الظاهر عبد الله بن محمد الانزاين محمد بن احمد في
الباطن فهذا النسب هكذا كان في كتاب مولانا ع م على
هذا النسق ثم ذكر في كتابه هذه الرواية عن جعفر بن محمد
عليه السلام قال جاء رجل من الشيعة الى جعفر بن محمد ع م
فقال يا ابن رسول الله كان من بني امية لنا ولاة من ملك
ومن العباس الان وكلا من ملك فليس يكون منكم الا
ولا حتى تقوم الساعة منه فقال جعفر بن محمد صلى الله ال
الله الا محمد ان لم يكن منهم الا المهدي واحد عنا بشركم
بالمهدي المنتظر الذي يعز الحق على يديه اول من يصعد
على منبر جده ويجاهد برايات المؤمنين على الخف حتى
يزول به الخبث عن اهل شيعته ويعز جميع المؤمنين في
دولته ويكون بظهوره عز آل محمد الى آخر الدنيا ويكون
من ولده هداة مهديين مؤيدين الى ان تقوم الساعة
منا المهدي ومنا الهادي ومنا المهتدي به ومنا من يطلع
الشمس على رأسه فان كنت تريد الذي قال فيه رسول الله
صلى الله عليه وآله يقوم القيامة وملك الدنيا في يدي رجل

من ولدي من ولد الحسين وهو الذي يصلي خلفه عيسى
ابن مريم فانما يكون ذلك في زمان الزلازل ومخارج
فلا يمنه الا واثق بعلمه يعني انه لا ينفع في ايامه عمل
ولا تقبل توبة وهو اخر الدنيا وقال مولانا ايضا في كتاب
ولابد بين كل ناطقين من امام ملك يظهر بالسلطان
الظاهر والسيف عند تغير الامة وعلو الظلمة فكان ادريس
بين آدم ونوح وكان فالغ بن عابر بين نوح وابراهيم
وكان يوسف بن يعقوب بين ابراهيم وموسى وكان [داود]
وسليمان بين موسى وعيسى وكان بخت نصر بين عيسى
ومحمد فيعني ان المهدي بين محمد وبين صاحب القيمة
ويروى عن علي ابن ابي طالب صع انه قال يكون بعد السابع
المهدي فترة يارز العلم بين المسجدين كما تارز الحية في
جحرها ثم لا ترى وعنكم الصاحبكم بين عوكري نفسه بالسيف
فيعني يارز فيستخفي فيحجز بين المسجدين يعني بين الامامين
بين جعفر بن محمد والامام الذي يظهر بالسيف وعلى
هولاء السبعة من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله السابع
جعفر بن محمد صلوات الله عليه واجاب مولانا عبدالله صع
وقد سئل عن الشرح الذي كان بين الناطق الى الناطق

سبعة

سبعة ائمة وقد ذكر العدة في الائمة التي بين ذكرهم من ابائه عم
بعدد اكثر من سبعة فقال في كتابه الى ثابت صلوات الله عليه
انه في سبع مراتب تدور كما تدور الايام يكون فيها من
الائمة ماشاء الله حتى يظهر الناطق بعدة مع المراد الله سبحنه
فهذا المعنى كتب به الى ناحية باليمن مولانا امير المؤمنين
عن الله صلى الله عليه الا الزيادة في معنى الشرح ولا نقصان و
بالروايات التي فيها الاثار يكون لفظة زادت او لفظة نقصت
للتفصيل المعنى ان الكتاب لم يحفظ على النسق والحمد لله رب
العالمين وصلى الله على النبي محمد والصفوة من آله وسلم تسليما

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الر تلك آيات الكتاب المبين انا انزلناه قرانا عربيا لعلكم
تعقلون نحن نقص عليك احسن القصص بما اوحينا اليك
هذا القرآن وان كنت من قبله لمن الغافلين اذ قال يوسف
لابيه يا ابت اني رأيت احد عشر كوكبا والشمس والقمر
رأيتهم لي ساجدين قال يا بني لا تقصص رؤياك على اخوتك
فيكيدوا لك كيدا ان الشيطان للانسان عدو مبين وكذلك
يجتبيك ربك ويعلمك من تأويل الاحاديث ويتم نعمته عليك
وعلى آل يعقوب كما اتمها على ابويك من قبل ابراهيم واسحق

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

ورد هذا المعنى المشروح فى كتابنا إلى ناحيتنا باليمن من مولانا الإمام عبد الله أمير المؤمنين صلوات الله عليه بعد نزوله فى المهديّة المباركة .

لمّا اشتدّت المحنة وعظمت التقيّة فى أيّام جعفر بن محمد صلوات الله عليه كتم اسم الإمام من ولده تقيّة عليه . فلم يطّلع عليه فى حياة جعفر بن محمد ولا بعد وفاته صلوات الله عليه ، إلا أوثق الثقاة من شيعته ؛ وكان يقول : « التقيّة دينى ودين آبائى ، ومن لا تقية له فلا دين له » .

فتعلّقَ كلٌّ فرقة من الشيعة بواحد من أربعة من ولد جعفر بن محمد ، وهم : موسى وإسماعيل ومحمد وعبد الله . وكلٌّ منهم على غير عَقْد مُؤكَّد منه . وكان صاحب الحق منهم عبد الله بن جعفر صلوات الله عليه ، فلم يكن عِلْم مقامه إلا عند الأبواب والثقاة تقيّةً عليه . وقد تعلّق به قوم [على] غير هذه الحقيقة تَوَهُّماً منهم .

فلمّا أراد الأئمة من ولد جعفر إحياء دعوة الحق خافوا من نِفاق المنافقين ، فتَسَمَّوْا — صلى الله عليهم — بغير أسمائهم ، فجعلوا أسماءهم

للدعوة فى مقام الُحجَج ، وتَسمَّوْا بمُبارَك ومَيْمون وسَعيد للفأل الحسن فى هذه الأسماء .

وأشاروا بالإمامة إلى عبد الله ، وتَسَمَّى بإسماعيل ، ودعوا إلى أن المهدى صلوات الله عليه اسمه محمّد بن إسماعيل ، لأنه محمد وهو من ولد عبدالله الذى تسمَّى بإسماعيل . فنافقَ جماعة ممّن دُعِى ، فذكروا إسماعيل ومحمد بن إسماعيل ، وهما لا يوجدان ، وأصحاب الحقّ سالِمون آمِنون .

فكان كلّما قام منهم إمام تَسَمَّى بمحمد ، والإشارة فى الدعوة إلى محمد بن إسماعيل . والمراد بإسماعيل عبد الله ؛ والمراد بمحمد كل من كان فى عصره إلى أن يظهر صاحب الظهور وهو محمد ، فتزول التقيه . والأمر منتظم بهذه التسمية .

فقال مولانا صلوات الله عليه فى كتابه حين ذكر هذا المعنى من التقية فى الأسماء ، قال : فجعل الله فى ذلك خيرا كثيرا . فكان الإمام عبد الله بن جعفر ، ثم بعده [محمد] بن عبد الله ، [ثم عبد الله بن محمد] ،(١) ثم أحمد بن عبدالله ، ثم محمد بن أحمد . فكل

(١) فى الأصل : ثم بعده عبد الله بن عبد الله . والظاهر أن العبارة ناقصة . وقد ذكر المؤلف فيما سبق اسم محمد بن عبد الله (= محمد بن إسماعيل) ، فأضفنا إلى الأسماء التي وردت في الأصل اسمى محمد بن عبد الله وابنه عبد الله بن محمد .

هؤلاء تَسَمَّى بمحمّد محمّد ، خلا عبد الله بن جعفر ، فإنه تسمَّى بإسماعيل . هكذا قال مولانا صلوات الله عليه فى كتابه .

فكان ورد كتاب من محمد بن أحمد صلوات الله عليه ، فيه رسالة أوّلها : من محمد بن محمد . فجعلها عند المؤمنين إشارة وحجّة وتذكرة إلى وقت ظهور هذا البيان .

ثم أَوْصَى محمد بن أحمد إلى ابن أخيه ، وأعطاه باختيار الله أمره كلّه ، وتسمَّى سعيد بن الحسين . فجرت الدعوة إليه زمانا [بعد] ذلك[1] . فلمّا ظهر أظهر مقامه ، وأظهر اسم عبد الله ، فهو مولانا عبد الله الإمام صلّى الله عليه .

وظهر معه مولانا أبو القاسم صلوات الله عليهما ، اسمه محمد . فصَحَّت الإشارة إلى القائم [بن] المهدى[2] محمد بن عبد الله أبى القاسم ، الإمام المُنْتَظَر لِعِزّ دولة الدين والجهاد برايات المؤمنين .

فكتب مولانا عبد الله صلى الله عليه بمعنى هذا الشرح ، وإن كان لم يُحْفَظ على انتظام الكلام على النسق . ثم نَسَبَ نفسه فقال : والولىّ الآن (يعنى نفسه) علىّ بن الحسين بن أحمد بن عبد الله الثانى

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(١) فى الأصل : بذلك .

(٢) فى الأصل : إلى القائم المهدى .

[ابن محمد] بن عبد الله[١] بن جعفر بن محمد بن على بن الحسين بن على صلوات الله عليهم أجمعين . واسمه[٢] الظاهر عبد الله بن محمد ، لأنه ابن محمد بن أحمد فى الباطن . فهذا النسب هكذا كان فى كتاب مولانا عليه السلام على هذا النسق .

ثم ذكر فى كتابه هذه الرواية عن جعفر بن محمد عليه السلام، فقال: جاء رجل من الشيعة إلى جعفر بن محمد عليه السلام ، فقال : يا ابن رسول الله ، كان من بنى أمية كذا وكذا من ملك ، و بنى العباس كذا وكذا من ملك، وليس يكون منكم إلا مهدىّ واحد تقوم الساعة منه . فقال جعفر بن محمد صلوات الله عليه : لقد قلَّل الله آل محمد أن لم يكن منهم إلا مهدىّ واحد ، وإنما نُبشِّركم بالمهتدى المنتظر الذى يَعز الحق على يده ، أول من يصعد على منبر جده ، ويُجاهد برايات المؤمنين على أخذ حقه ، ويزول به المحنة عن أهل شيعته ، ويعز جميع المؤمنين فى دولته . ويكون بظهوره عِزّ آل محمد إلى آخر الدنيا ، ويكون ولده[٣] هداة

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(١) فى الأصل : والولى الآن يعنى نفسه على بن الحسين بن على بن أحمد ابن عبد الله بن عبد الله ثانيه . نقول : إن الأسماء بهذا النسق لا توافق بما سبق من الأسماء المستورين . والظاهر أنه وقع الخلط فى هذا الموقع .

(٢) فى الأصل : واسم .

(٣) فى الأصل : ويكون من ولده . وقد يكون القراءة : ويكون بعض أو جماعة من ولده .

مهديّين مؤيَّدين إلى أن تقوم الساعة . فمنّا المهدىّ ، ومنا الهادى، ومنا المهتدى به ، ومنا من تطلع الشمس على رأسه . فإن كنت تريد الذى قال فيه رسول الله صلّى الله عليه وآله : تقوم القيامة ومُلك الدنيا فى يدى رجل من ولدى من ولد الحسين ، وهو الذى يُصلى خلفه عيسى ابن مريم ، فإنما يكون ذلك فى زمان الزلزال وخِداج الأعمال ، فلا يتبعه[١] إلا واثِق بعلمه، يعنى أنه لا ينفع فى أيامه عملٌ حادِث ولا تُقبَل توبة ، وهو آخر الدنيا .

وقال مولانا أيضا فى كتابه :[٢] ولا بد بين كل ناطقين من إمام مملّك يظهر بالسلطان الظاهر والسيف عند تقية الأئمة وعُلوّ الظلمة . فكان إدريس بين آدم ونوح ، وكان فالع بن عابر بين نوح وإبراهيم ، وكان يوسف بن يعقوب بين إبراهيم وموسى ، وكان داود وسليمان بين موسى وعيسى، وكان بخت نصر بين عيسى ومحمد . فيعنى أن المهدىّ بين محمد و بين صاحب القيامة .

ويروى عن على بن أبى طالب صلوات الله عليه أنه قال : يكون بعد السابع المهدىّ فترة تأرِز العِلم بين المسجدين ، كما تأرِز الحية فى

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(١) فى الأصل : فلا يتمنه ، فيه تحريف وتصحيف .

(٢) فى الأصل: كتاب .

جحرها؛[١] ثم لا يَروعكم إلا صاحبكم يدعوكم إلى نفسه بالسيف. فيعنى تأرِز يستخفى وينحجز؛ وبين المسجدين يعنى بين الإمامين، بين جعفر ابن محمد والإمام الذى يظهر بالسيف، وعدد[٢] هؤلاء السبعة من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله . فالسابع جعفر بن محمد صلوات الله عليه .

وأجاب مولانا عبد الله وقد سئل عن الشرح[٣] الذى كان بين الناطق إلى الناطق سبعة أئمة ، وَقد ذُكر العدد فى الأئمة الذين ذُكروا[٤] من آبائه عليهم السلام بعدد أكثر من سبعة ، فقال فى كتابه[٥] صلوات الله عليه : إنما هى سبع مراتب ، تدور كما تدور الأيّام ، يكون فيها من الأئمة ما شاء الله، حتى يظهر الناطق بَغتةً متى أراد الله سبحانه .

فهذا المعنى كتب به إلى ناحيتنا باليمن مولانا أمير المؤمنين عبدالله صلوات الله عليه ، بلا زيادة فى معنى الشرح ولا نقصان، وبالروايات التى فيها ، إلا أن يكون لفظة زادت ، أو لفظة نقصت ، ولا تُحيل المعنى لأن الكتاب لم يُحفَظ على النسق .

والحمد لله رب العالمين . وصلى الله على النبي محمد والصفوة من آله وسلم تسليما .

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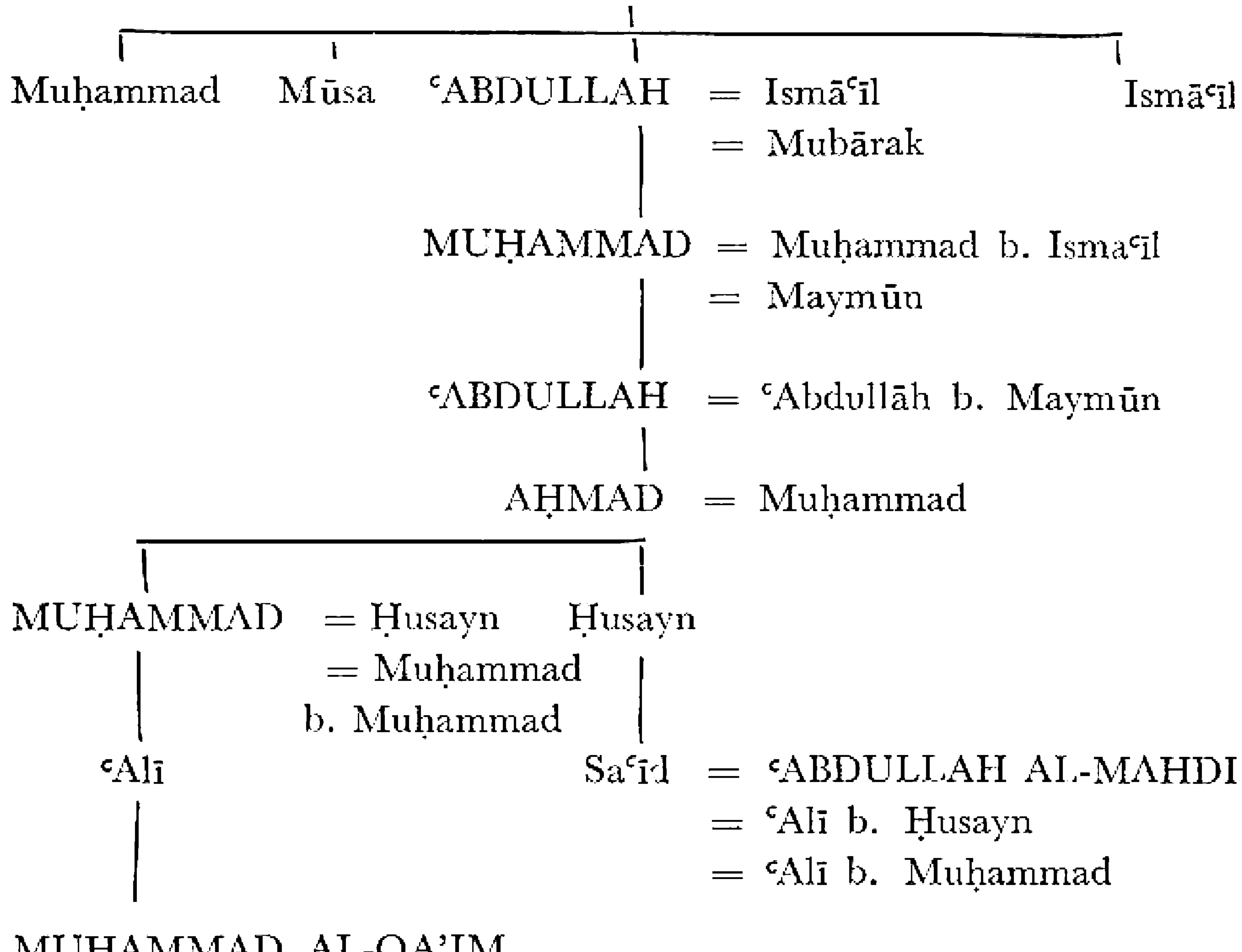
(١) روى فى الحديث أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : إن الإيمان بدأ غريبا وسيعود كما بدأ ؛ فطوبى للغرباء . إذا فسد الناس ، والذى نفس أبى القاسم بيده ، ليَزوأنّ الإيمان بين هذين المسجدين كما تأرز الحية فى جحرها .

(٢) فى الأصل : وعد. (٣) كذا فى الأصل . وإنما نرجح أن يكون اللفظ نكرة .

(٤) فى الأصل : ذكر . (٥) فى الأصل : فى كتابه له ثانى .

Appendix

Real and Esoteric Names of *al-Mastūrūn* (the Hidden Imams)



Note: The real names of the Imāms are given in capital letters, except that of Mahdī, whose real name was Saᶜīd b. Ḥusayn, generally called Saᶜīd al-Khayr.

Abu'l-Qāsim had stronger claim to the Imāmate of his deceased father, it was also in the interest of the State founded by Mahdī that the importance of his successor was magnified by giving him the imposing names of "Abu'l-Qāsim Muḥammad b. ʿAbdullāh", "al-Qā'im b. al-Mahdī", and "Ṣaḥib aẓ-Ẓuhūr".

Although the Fāṭimids, in both the Periods of Satr and Ẓuhūr, did not lift the camouflage of "Ismāʿīl", they also never used for themselves the appellation of "Ismāʿīlī", and preferred to call themselves "Sons of Fāṭima". While discussing the sect of "Ismāʿīlīyya" in his *Kitāb az-Zīna*,[30] Shaykh Abū Ḥātim Aḥmad b. Ḥamdān ar-Rāzī (died 322/934), Mahdi's contemporary and Chief of the Daʿwat in the East, does not identify the sect with the Daʿwat organization of the Fāṭimids. We have also not come across in the official Fāṭimid Daʿwat literature or in that of its Yemenite offshoot, any reference to the misnomer "Ismāʿīlī", in relation to the Daʿwat, its articles of faith, or its Weltanschauung. In the light of the Report, which denies the Imāmate of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, we prefer to qualify the Daʿwat by the term "Fāṭimid".

We do not claim that the conclusions we have drawn, or the views expressed in the above, are the last word on the subject. On the vexing question of the genealogy of Hidden Imāms, guarded for centuries as one of the "secrets of Friends of Allāh" (أسرار أولياء الله), and torn asunder by the antitheses of facts and fiction, there can and will be no consensus of opinion. All that we have done is to give Jaʿfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman's statement on Mahdī's letter on the subject of real and esoteric names of his hidden predecessors a chance to appear, and to consider if solutions which it suggests were historically feasible, all this with a view to inviting a full and unfettered discussion.

(30) Ms. Muḥammadī Hamdānī Collection, pp. 232-33.

as Imām-Mahdī, nor that he proclaimed his own rank as Mahdī. We are inclined to favour the latter interpretation, and not to reject the statement categorically made by the Yemenite Dāʿī Sulṭān al-Khaṭṭāb b. Ḥasan al-al-Ḥajūrī al-Hamdānī (died circa 534-1139),[26] in his treatise *Ghāyat al-Mawālid*,[27] that ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad,[28] while proceeding to the Maghrib, disappeared,[29] leaving behind his Ḥujjat Saʿīd al-Khayr, who assumed the name of Mahdī. According to al-Khaṭṭāb, Mahdī ʿAbdullāh was really Saʿīd, who handed over, before his death, the charge of the Daʿwat to his "spiritual" son and legitimate Mustaqarr Imām Abu'l-Qāsim al-Qā'im Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. From what has gone above, we conclude that ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad was earmarked as Imām-Mahdī, but he died on his way to the Maghrib. Thereupon, Saʿīd, who was actually and temporarily directing all operations as Imām on behalf of his cousin ʿAlī b. Muḥammad, took over the rank and names of the deceased; this was in order to reach the goal of empire, now very near at hand thanks to the great successes scored in the Maghrib by Dāʿī ʿAbdullāh ash-Shīʿī. The fact that Mahdī ʿAbdullāh was really Saʿīd had, for political and doctrinal reasons, to be hushed up in the Report by vague and ambiguous phraseology.

When Mahdī's successor Abu'l-Qāsim al-Qā'im Muḥammad b. ʿAlī was firmly established, there was no need of *taqiyya* in respect of his real person. Hence the Period of Ẓuhūr begins actually with Qā'im, who is regarded as the first Imām of this period. Aided by the fact that

(26) Vide *aṣ-Ṣulayḥiyyūn*, pp. 193-204.

(27) Ms. Muḥammadī Hamdānī Collection.

(28) Here the person meant is ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. The names "Ḥusayn" and "Muḥammad" alternate as father of Mahdī, making it at times difficult to identify the real person of Mahdī and to distinguish between cousins — ʿAlī b. Muḥammad (= Ḥusayn) b. Aḥmad and Saʿīd (= ʿAlī) b. Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad.

(29) *Aẓhara'l-ghaybata* : literally disappeared, hence died.

nor any reference to the principle of *istiqrār* and *istīdā*ᶜ — a principle which was invented later to explain discrepancies in the geneology under discussion. The name of Mubārak can be identified with ᶜAbdullāh (= Ismāᶜīl), if the authority of *Sullam an-Najāt*, which is supposed to be the work of Abū Yaᶜqūb as-Sijistānī (died 331/942) is relied upon, for in that work, as also pointed out by Ivanow,[24] Mubārak is clearly mentioned as the sixth Imām.

The Report gives little or no information about individual Imāms, except mentioning their "real" and "esoteric" names. Apart from the name of "Muḥammad", which was used by all Imams of the Period of Satr, Aḥmad b. ᶜAbdullāh does not have any other name.

The real name of Mahdī's predecessor is Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, though he was known more by his esoteric name, Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad, which, according to the Report, was the name of his brother.

Mahdī belonged partly to the Pre-Ẓuhūr Period, and a great deal of secrecy was attached to the real person of Mahdī, before and after his arrival in the Maghrib. Mahdī gives his own real name as ᶜAlī b. Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad, and not ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. The Report points out that Muḥammad (= Ḥusayn) b. Aḥmad vested in his nephew Saᶜīd b. Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad the full powers of the Imāmate, and that Saᶜīd took over charge of the Daᶜwat "for some time".[25] The language of the Report at this point is purposely dubious and vague, when it says : "When he appeared, he proclaimed his rank, and proclaimed the name of ᶜAbdullāh, for he is our Master ᶜAbdullāh the Imām". It does not explicitly say that he (Saᶜīd) proclaimed the rank of his cousin ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad

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(24) *Ibid.*, p. 111

(25) Saᶜīd was vested with the powers of the Imāmate till such time as circumstances would permit ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad to take it over from the former.

"Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl", by adopting the name of his client or Ḥujjat — "Maymūn". It is likely that Muḥammad, who did not, and could not, according to accounts, live a settled life at one place, went underground during his wanderings by assuming the name of "Maymūn".

His son ʿAbdullāh b. Muḥammad, who led a more chequered and mysterious life, hid under the curtain of "ʿAbdullāh b. Maymūn". The name of ʿAbdullāh b. Muḥammad (= ʿAbdullāh b. Maymūn) was identified with that of ʿAbdullah b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ, giving rise to the myth of the latter's being the founder of Ismāʿīlism and progenitor of the "Fāṭimid" dynasty. Ivanow has pointed out, with the aid of Shīʿite Ithnā-ʿasharī ḥadīth literature, that Maymūn was a freed-slave of Imāms Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (al-Bāqir) and Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad (aṣ-Ṣādiq), that Maymūn and his son ʿAbdullāh were faithful and trusted servants as well as *rāwīs* who related a number of traditions from Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad chiefly on domestic matters, and that the name of ʿAbdullāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ was wrongly identified with "ʿAbdullāh b. Maymūn", which was the esoteric name of ʿAbdullāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar.[23] The Report contains a hint that names of Ḥujjats, like Mubārak, Maymūn and Saʿīd, were adopted by the Imāms "for good omen" ! We cannot say that the Daʿwat had, as early as the lifetime of ʿAbdullāh b. Muḥammad (= ʿAbdullāh b. Maymūn), grown into a well-knit hierarchy, though it is likely that such a system as the Fāṭimids developed later might have been planned, and that trusted servants and clients like Mubārak, Maymūn and Ibn Maymūn, might have been conceived of as occupying the position of Ḥujjat. There is, in the Report, no mention of "al-Qaddāḥ", or his son,

(23) Ivanow : *The Alleged Founder*, p. 63.

large following. According to the Report, ʿAbdullāh was the legitimate Imām, but this fact was known only to the most trusted followers of his father, who kept his rank as legitimate Imām a guarded secret. The reason for this is not far to seek. It was his Successor-Imām, his son Muḥammad, who had to be safeguarded against the hostility of ʿAbbāsid rulers and their agents and against "the treachery of hypocrites".

The Report claims that ʿAbdullāh had a son, called Muḥammad, whose esoteric name was "Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl", for Ismāʿīl, or his son Muḥammad, argues the Report, "never existed" as Imāms. It is likely that he was, with the knowledge and connivance of Jaʿfar, known in Medina as "Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl". Thus the fact of his being the son of ʿAbdullāh was successfully blacked out during and after the lifetime of Ja'far b. Muḥammad. If Muḥammad b. ʿAbdullāh is identical with "Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl", he left Medina and emigrated to the East, on realizing the losing position of his father ʿAbdullāh, the growing influence of his uncle Mūsa, and the hopeless situation of schismatic discussions, which Jaʿfar unsuccessfully tried to suppress. Little is, however, known about him, though legends grew up round his person in later times. There emerges from this the conclusion that it was a part of a plan, conceived during the lifetime of Jaʿfar and carried on by the successors of ʿAbdullāh, to attribute the Imāmate to Ismāʿīl, and to declare that the Imām after Ismāʿīl was "Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl", which was the esoteric name of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdullāh. The Report, however, is clear on the point that ʿAbdullāh did not assume the name of Ismāʿīl. It was his successors, and we suppose his son Muḥammad, who assumed for themselves the ancestry of Ismaʿīl as a camouflage. As time went on, more confusion was created, in addition to calling him

facts with theories and complicated explanations arising out of assumed names. It was also politically inexpedient to discuss questions which might have resulted in long-drawn controversies, attacks and counter-attacks. Having firmly established their Empire, they could afford to practice scornful silence.

Let us take the astounding statement in the Report about the Successor-Imām to Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad. It says,on the authority of no less a person than Mahdī, that the legitimate Imām after Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad was his eldest son ʿAbdullāh, and not Ismāʿīl. It further asserts, on the same authority, that ʿAbdullāh was succeeded by his son Muḥammad. These statements are so at variance with conceptions we have had so far on the subject that we must examine them carefully before we can accept them as feasible.

Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad was married to his cousin Fāṭima, an aristocratic Arab lady, by whom he had two sons, ʿAbdullāh and Ismāʿīl, and a daughter. ʿAbdullāh, being the eldest son of Jaʿfar, fulfilled the condition of the Imāmate. Ismāʿīl, who predeceased his father, or his progeny, could, therefore, have no claim to this office. Musa was born of a negro wife of Jaʿfar and was much junior. Nawbakhtī admits the fact that Mūsa was not the heir-apparent.[22] Mūsa's younger brother, Muḥammad, had little or no claim to the Imāmate.

The succession to the Imāmate after Jaʿfar's death was a matter of bitter contest between his sons. A large multitude of Jaʿfar's followers accepted ʿAbdullāh as Imām, but ʿAbdullāh was never firmly established because of the fierce rivalries of his brothers. His following dwindled, and he soon died. Muḥammad, after a fruitless rebellion in the Sacred City of Mecca, was deported to Persia, where he died. This left the field open to Mūsa, who mustered a

(22) Nawbakhtī, *Firaq ash-Shīʿa,* p. 57 ff

considered. It also provides material which might help us in understanding, if not settling finally, certain controversial aspects of the subject of Mahdī's forefathers.

The Report is not meant for public display, for it is included in Jaʿfar's work on the esoteric exegesis of some parts of the Qur'ān, and the genealogy contained in Mahdī's letter was meant to be conveyed only to the most trusted Dāʿīs then stationed in the Yemen — Jaʿfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, or ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAbbās ash-Shāwirī. In the archives of the Daʿwat, it is treated as "Highly Confidential".

The Report gives a simple and innocent explanation of the secrecy with which this genealogy was maintained. Imāms were called sometimes by names other than their own, sometimes by names of their Ḥujjats, mostly by the name of "Muḥammad", as a precautionary measure (*taqiyya*) designed to ward off the danger of their persons being discovered. The explanation may hold good in the case of Imāms of the Period of *Satr* (Concealment), beginning with ʿAbdullāh b. Jaʿfar (= Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar) and ending finally with the installation of Qā'im to the Imāmate. Historical facts concerning the names of hidden Imāms, however, were not made public even when the Fāṭimids were at the height of their power. In the light of this Report, we are inclined to think that the Fāṭimid Caliph-Imāms purposely avoided discussing the matter of their ancestry, which was seldom known even to high-ranking dignitaries of their hierarchy or to their confidants. It was a preconceived plan to keep their genealogy a top secret, due to the intricate and dark passages it passed through and due to contradictions involved in the adoption of assumed names. The problem of their ancestry was linked with doctrinal questions, such as essential conditions of the Imāmate, and would have called for minute adjustments of

Consequently, the Daᶜwat was administered in his name for some time. When he [Mahdī] appeared, he proclaimed his rank, and proclaimed the name of ᶜAbdullāh, for he is our Master ᶜAbdullāh the Imām (God bless him !)

"And there appeared with him our Master Abu'l-Qāsim (God bless them both !), whose name is Muḥammad. Thus the prophecy (*'ishāra*) on the advent of al-Qā'im, [son of] al-Mahdī — Muḥammad b. ᶜAbdullāh Abu'l-Qāsim — the Imām, the one awaited for the glory of the theocratic state (*dawlat ad-dīn*), and for the holy war with banners carried aloft by the faithful, came true.[18]

"Our Master ᶜAbdullāh (God bless him !) wrote to elaborate this following idea, though the sequence of its wording is not remembered. He traced his own lineage, saying : The Imām (*al-Walī*) — meaning himself — nowadays is ᶜAlī, son of Ḥusayn, son of Aḥmad, son of ᶜAbdullāh, son of Muḥammad, son of ᶜAbdullāh,[19] son of Jaᶜfar, son of Muḥammad, son of ᶜAlī, son of Ḥusayn, son of ᶜAlī — God bless them all ![20] His public name is ᶜAbdullāh b. Muḥammad, for he is spiritually (*bi'l-bāṭin*) son of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. The pedigree is thus given in the letter of our Master."

Here follows a passage, containing sayings and prophecies of Jaᶜfar b. Muḥammad on the advent of Mahdī — the translation of which, being devoid of historical import, we have omitted.[21] Lastly, the Report ends with Dāᶜī Jaᶜfar's apology — quoted above — for his inability to produce Mahdī's letter verbatim.

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The Dāᶜī Jaᶜfar's Report on Mahdī's letter presents us with a few problems and difficulties which remain to be

(18) This refers to the saying of Jaᶜfar b. Muḥammad, which is quoted in the last part of the Report : *innamā nubashshirukum...* Vide the Arabic text.

(19) In the Arabic text, p. 12 and Note 1), there has at this point been an insertion of the expression "his second" (*thānīhi*). This may be a scribe's error and may have been meant to be used in reference to his grandson, ᶜAbdullāh b. Muḥammad b. ᶜAbdullāh (vide Appendix : Genealogical Table).

(20) There is confusion in names as they read in the Ms. at our disposal Our translation is, however, based on the internal evidence of the Report itself.

(21) Vide the full Arabic text, which is given at the end of this discussion.

"[Further] they referred to the Imāmate of ᶜAbdullāh, while calling him 'Ismāᶜīl'; and they declared that the name of Mahdī (God bless him !) was 'Muḥammad b. Ismāᶜīl'; for Muḥammad was the son of ᶜAbdullāh, who was called 'Ismāᶜīl.' Some people who had joined the Daᶜwat defected treacherously, and divulged [the names of] Ismāᶜīl' and 'Muḥammad b. Ismāᶜīl'; when [as a matter of fact] these two did not exist. The legitimate Imāms (*Aṣḥāb al-ḥaqq*) thus remained safe and secure.

"Whenever an Imām arose from amongst them, he was called 'Muḥammad', thus the designation of 'Muḥammad b. Ismāᶜīl' esoterically; [The name of] 'Ismāᶜīl' was substituted for ᶜAbdullāh, and the name of 'Muḥammad' was used to denote the person of every Imām in his own time, till the advent of *Ṣāḥib az-ẓuhūr*, and he [also] is 'Muḥammad'.[15] At that time *taqiyya* ceases to exist. Such was invariably the case in thus naming [Imāms].

"Commenting in his letter on the signficance of *taqiyya* in [the use of assumed] names, our Master (God bless him !) said : God vouchsafed by that [practice] abundant bounty. The Imām was ᶜAbdullāh b. Jaᶜfar. He was succeeded by [Muḥammad] b. ᶜAbdullāh, ᶜAbdullāh b. Muḥammad, Aḥmad b. ᶜAbdullāh, and Muḥammad b. Aḥmad.[16] All these Imāms were called 'Muḥammad', except ᶜAbdullāh b. Jaᶜfar, who was styled 'Ismāᶜīl'. This is what our Master said in his letter.

"On a previous occasion a letter had arrived at our headquarters in the Yaman, sent from Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, containing a message which began with : From Muḥammad b. Muḥammad. He gave therein to the faithful a sign, proof and rejoinder about the impending appearance of Imām al-Mahdī.[17]

"Muḥammad b. Aḥmad vested, by divine preference, in his nephew, who was called Saᶜīd b. al-Ḥusayn, full charge of the Imāmate.

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(15) By "Ṣāḥib az-ẓuhūr" is meant Muḥammad al-Qā'im, who had no esoteric name.

(16) The text at this point is defective and unsatisfactory. Previously the Report mentions clearly the name of Muḥammad b. ᶜAbdullāh (= Muḥammad b. Ismāᶜīl), which would not be omitted at this place, unless the text had been tampered with or had undergone a grave omission by scribe's neglect. The above additions in brackets are based on reconstructions from prior statements in the text. See the Arabic text.

(17) Literally : "... about the time of appearance of the Imām referred to in this statement." We interpret the sentence as follows : He gave to the faithful in the Yemen a rejoinder to the effect that the time of Mahdī's appearance in their country was fast approaching.

book, *al-Farā'iḍ wa Ḥudūd ad-Dīn*, pp. 13-19 :

"In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is the substance of a letter addressed by our Master the Imām ᶜAbdullāh, Lord of the faithful (God bless him !) to our side in the Yaman after his arrival at al-Mahdīyya. Realizing the gravity of adverse circumstances and imminent need of precaution (*taqiyya*), Jaᶜfar b. Muḥammad did not, in his lifetime, disclose the name of [his successor] Imām from amongst his sons out of fear for his safety. During the lifetime of Jaᶜfar b. Muḥammad and after his death, no one except the most intimate of his followers (*shīᶜa*) possessed information about his successor-Imām. He (Jaᶜfar b. Muḥammad) used to say : *Taqiyya* is [the cardinal principle of] my faith, and the faith of my forefathers. He who does not practice *taqiyya* has no faith.

"Every Shīᶜite schism clung to one of the four sons of Jaᶜfar b. Muḥammad, viz., Mūsa, Ismāᶜīl, Muḥammad and ᶜAbdullāh; and all of them were unaware of his (Jaᶜfar b. Muḥammad's) testament. The legitimate Imām (*Ṣāḥib al-Ḥaqq*), however, was ᶜAbdullāh, son of Jaᶜfar (God bless him !), but the knowledge of his rank as Imām was possessed only by the Gates (*Bābs*) and confidants as a measure of safety (*taqiyya*) for him. Some people clung to ᶜAbdullāh by mere supposition, without [assuring themselves of] this fact.[13]

"As the Imāms descending from Jaᶜfar wished to resuscitate the True Daᶜwat (*Daᶜwat al-Ḥaqq*), and feared the treachery of hypocrites, they assumed names other than their own, and used for themselves esoterically[14] names denoting the rank of Proofs (*Ḥujjats*), and styled themselves as 'Mubārak' (Auspicious), 'Maymūn' (Blessed) and 'Saᶜīd' (Happy) because of the good omen in these names.

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(13) ᶜAbdullāh's Imāmate was upheld by a large multitude of his father's followers. They did so without assuring themselves of the fact that he was the legitimate Imām appointed unequivocally by his father Jaᶜfar b. Muḥammad; they took for granted that he would be Imām, in the absence of a clear and definite appointment (*naṣṣ jalī*).

(14) The expressions "*li'd Daᶜwati*" and "*fi'd-Daᶜwati*" may be taken to mean "esoterically". The expressions "esoteric names" or "names used esoterically" are here used to indicate camouflage names or pseudonyms assumed for purposes of concealment and safety, both within the fold of the Daᶜwat organization as well as from the outside world.

It should be noted further that there were often several levels of secrecy. Esoteric names were often assumed to hide other already assumed names, thus giving an indication of the possible confusion for scholars in the fact that one person might have several pseudonyms or esoteric names in addition to his real one.

anyone else, to tell us the truth about Mahdī's ancestors, i.e., the Hidden Imāms.

Most of his works which have come down to us deal with Qur'ānic exegesis, stretching *ta'wīl* (esoteric interpretation) to utmost limits in favour of his Fāṭimid masters. Though he lived through a most exciting and epoch-making period both in the Yemen and the Maghrib, Jaʿfar is extremly impersonal in his writings, hardly mentions himself or his times, and left, as far as we know, no account of contemporary events. He considered, however, the problem of Mahdī's pedigree to be of such paramount importance for building up and supporting his concept of *Nāṭiqs* that he suddenly interrupts his commentary on *ajal musamma* (prescribed time), which he interprets as the advent of al-Mahdī, the seventh Nāṭiq, and ends his chapter by reporting on Mahdī's letter on the real and assumed names of his forefathers. Jaʿfar does not give the letter in toto, but reproduces what he remembers of it, omitting the usual *ḥamdala* and *ṣalawāt*, and winding it up with the following statement :

> "This is the substance of what our Master, Lord of the faithful, ʿAbdullāh, wrote to our side in the Yemen, without addition to, or subtraction from, the signficance of the [original] version, and according to the narrative in which it exists, save that a word more, or a word less, might have resulted without affecting its meaning, for the [original] letter in its entirety has not been preserved."

The apology contained in the above statement for the non-availability of the original document, and for relying upon his memory, can be understood, if we take account of the adverse circumstances in which he had to leave or flee from his homeland to seek refuge in Mahdī's capital.

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The following is a free rendering of relevant passages contained in Jaʿfar's Report on Mahdī's letter from his

to remain all these centuries in this book, and was not expunged or censored by the Daʿwat High Command, indicates that the Daʿwat at least accepted the Report as genuine. If we accept the Dāʿī Jaʿfar's version of Mahdī's letter, here we have an account of far-reaching significance for our studies. The contents of the letter, as reported by Jaʿfar, are interspersed with his own comments, and have undergone, as it appears, a few serious omissions and alterations. These may have happened as a result of later manipulations or tampering, or scribe's carelessness.[10]

Jaʿfar lived the prime of his life in the Yemen during the lifetime and after the death of his great father Manṣūr al-Yaman. He left his native land for the Maghrib about eighteen years after his father's death, fearing certain extinction of the Daʿwat and the State which had been created by Manṣūr al-Yaman and ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl al-Jadanī. Jaʿfar remained loyal, like his father, to the Fāṭimid cause, despite the revolt of ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl and the hostile attitude and defection of his brother Ḥasan, who subsequently assassinated his father's successor, Dāʿī ʿAbdullā b. ʿAbbās ash-Shāwirī.[11] Although when Jaʿfar arrived in Mahdīyya about the year 322/934 he found that Mahdī had died, he continued to enjoy the confidence of caliph-Imāms Qā'im, Manṣūr and Muʿizz, and occupied high rank in the Fāṭimid Daʿwat hierarchy.[12] Such being his position as a contemporary of Mahdī and his immediate successors, and as a Dāʿī who functioned both in the Yemen and the Maghrib, we may be justified in expecting him, more than

(10) The ms. at our disposal is quite modern, and we cannot rely upon its sole authority. It suffers from a few disadvantages, which are pointed out at relevant places.

(11) Janadī : *Sulūk*, ed. Kay, p. 151 and Yaḥya b. al-Ḥusayn : *Anbā' az-Zaman*, Ms. Dar. Cairo No. 1347, p. 35 mention the year 321, in which Ḥasan assassinated Shāwirī, and proclaimed his faith in orthodox Sunnite Islām.

(12) Vide *Aṣ-Ṣulayḥiyyūn*, pp. 50-54.

We ask whether we can accept Dāʿī Jaʿfar's version of the letter (referred to in this article as "Report") as genuine, particularly in view of its subject-matter which disturbs some of our conceptions derived from hitherto known sources. Once the Report is accepted as genuine, we can assess its value as a document.

His book, *al-Farā'iḍ wa Ḥudūd ad-Dīn*, was unquestionably regarded and preserved by the Yemenite Daʿwat as one of the main works of Dāʿī Jaʿfar.[8] It is also mentioned by Shaykh Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd ar-Rasūl (11th./17th. cent.) in his *Fihrist Kutub ad-Daʿwat.*[9] On comparison with his other works, we find that *al-Farā'iḍ* deals with Jaʿfar's favourite themes of Qur'ānic *ta'wīl* interpretations, and is written with his usual scholarly yet fluid style.

We have no reason to say that the Report, as contained in his book *al-Farā'iḍ*, is Jaʿfar's invention or fabrication. The question of the Imāmate is such a serious matter with all Shīʿites that his "invention" might have brought on him severe and adverse comment, if not excommunication and eternal perdition. We are not surprised by the silence of subsequent Fāṭimid authors on Jaʿfar's Report, for its publication or discussion would have unveiled the mystery of "Ismāʿīl", which the Fāṭimid propaganda purposely wanted to perpetuate. The fact that the Report was allowed

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(Ḥusayn) b. Aḥmad promises his followers in the Yemen the forthcoming appearance of Mahdī. This indicates that the plan of establishing the Fāṭimid Caliphate in the Yemen was worked out over a stretch of time, and not conceived by Mahdī spontaneously nor abandoned suddenly in favour of the Maghrib. The reasons why Mahdī abandoned the Yemen in preference to the Maghrib are discussed in our book, *Aṣ-Ṣulayḥiyyūn*, pp. 31-49 and Appendix pp. 367-69. This is perhaps the oldest reference to exchange of communications between the Imām's head-quarters and the community in the Yemen. All of this gives support to the statement that Manṣūr al-Yaman (Ibn Ḥawshab) was asked to proceed to ʿAdan Lāʿa, where he found the community eagerly awaiting the promised arrival of the Imām's emissary.

(8) *Aṣ-Ṣulayḥiyyūn*, pp. 256-57.

(9) Ms. Muḥammadī Hamdānī Collection.

tried to apply theories of *mīzān, aṣābīʿ, ḥujub, atimmāʾ* and *lawāḥiq*, and *istiqrār* and *istīdāʿ* to existing confusion about the assumed names of Mahdī's predecessors, and contradicted sometimes their own previous statements. They were gulled into accepting, as did the Druses, the Qaddāḥid origin, without realizing the contradiction involved in its acceptance.[5] We are forced, therefore, to fall back, for some kind of explanation of, if not solution to, the problem of Fāṭimid genealogy, chiefly upon the earliest contemporary sources.

In the archives of the Yemenite Daʿwat, we have come across such a contemporary account, which we place in this article for the consideration of students. In his book, *al-Farāʾiḍ wa Ḥudūd ad-Dīn*,[6] the Dāʿī Jaʿfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman gives revealing information by recounting the subject-matter of a letter sent by al-Mahdī ʿAbdullāh "to our side in the Yaman" (*ila nāḥiyatinā bi'l-Yamani*). The author does not give the name of the addressee. We presume, however, that the letter was addressed to Dāʿī Jaʿfar himself, or to Dāʿī ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAbbās ash-Shāwirī, who succeeded to the leadership of the Yemenite Daʿwat after the death (in 303/915) of Dāʿī Jaʿfar's father, Manṣur al-Yaman. Jaʿfar gives neither the date on which the letter was written, nor the exact time when it was received in the Yemen, save that it arrived "after Madhī's arrival in Mahdīyya", which event happened in Shawwāl 308/921.[7]

Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad. We have not come across this treatise, but found it mentioned in his book, *Al-Ibtidāʾwa'l-Intihā* (Ms. Muḥammadī Hamdānī Collection). Vide *JRAS*, 1932, p. 135; *JRAS*, 1933, pp. 361-62; and *Aṣ-Sulayḥiyyūn*, pp. 261-76.

(5) Vide Ivanow, *Alleged Founder*, p. 159; B. Lewis, *Origins of Ismāʿīlism*, p. 51-52 and Appendix II; and ʿAbbās al-Hamdānī, *The Qaddāḥid Legend*, p. 7-8;

(6) Ms. Muḥammadī Hamdānī Collection, Surat.

(7) Of particular interest to students of history is the fact that he mentions parenthetically another letter, which was received on a previous occasion, from Muḥammad b. Aḥmad (= Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad), Mahdī's predecessor. (Vide Appendix : Genealogical Table). In this, we suppose, the Imām Muḥammad

Baghdad in 402/1011 aimed at (1) imputing heresy to the Fāṭimids, and (2) contesting their ʿAlid descent".[3]

We find that the discussion of this problem was vigorously pursued by Yemenite adherents of the Daʿwat during and after the dissolution of the Fāṭimid Empire. With the publication, in our times, of some Fāṭimid texts of Yemenite origin has the problem been nearing solution, or have even some of its aspects been clarified ? These texts, unfortunately, suffer from serious contradictions, which are due to efforts at adjusting facts and events to doctrinal matters, and more particularly at preserving both the traditional and accepted narratives and inner secret versions of the Daʿwat organization. Without belittling the achievement of the Yemenite Daʿwat in loyally and heroically preserving, in their mountain citadels and academies, the intellectual heritage of their spiritual preceptors, we are constrained to say that subsequent Yemenite Daʿwat literature suffers from lack of cohesion and absence of critical sifting of material. It aims at preserving the past heritage of the Daʿwat by making compendiums, bringing together seemingly similar ideas or phenomena, and sometimes trying to reconcile these with newly invented theories. It does not stop at that, for it introduces foreign elements, which it tries to fit into the general Islāmic scheme of things. It seems that the Yemenites who came under the strong influence of the authors of the Historical Period (Dawr aẓ-Ẓuhūr), the men who built up the Fāṭimid doctrinal system, and especially under the influence of al-Mu'ayyad fi'd-dīn ash-Shīrāzī,[4]

(3) ʿAbbās H. al-Hamdānī, *The Qaddāḥid Legend*, Ms., pp. 1-2.

(4) As in the development of Fāṭimid dogma, so in this very pressing question, the Qāḍī Lamak b. Mālik al-Ḥammādī might have received directives from Mu'ayyad. The Yemenites might have also benefited by Mu'ayyad's treatise, *Ithbāt al-Imāma*, which he wrote on the subject of the Hidden Imāms (*al-Mastūrūn*) who succeeded

Ivanow, in his masterly study, *The Alleged Founder of Ismāʿīlism*, has tried to answer this question by pointing to a general prejudice, which existed in wide Shīʿīte circles, against "unveiling those whom God has veiled", and to the custom, arising out of this prejudice, of giving Imāms special surnames under which they were known.[1]

ʿAbbās al-Hamdānī is of the opinion that "the early Fāṭimid writers found no necessity to defend the Fāṭimid origin of the Caliph-Imāms of Africa and Egypt; since the Caliphs proclaimed themselves as descendants of Fāṭima from all the pulpits of their ever-growing Empire, there was no voice which disputed their almost universally accepted claim. It was only when the ʿAbbāsids began to sow the seeds of suspicion in the minds of the people by issuing a Manifesto in 402/1011 that the controversy about the origin of the Fāṭimids started. Prior to this, in the time of Caliph Muʿizz, historians such as Ibn Razzām had begun attributing Qaddāḥid origin to the Fāṭimids, but it was left to the official ʿAbbāsid Manifesto to make a formal denunciation of the Fāṭimid origin, and to set into motion a whole campaign. The ʿAbbāsid Caliph al-Qāhir found his Empire dwindling before his very eyes, and his territories incorporated in the Fāṭimid Empire. He saw Baghdad yielding its position of prestige as the seat of culture and science to Cairo; and he found himself a virtual prisoner of the Shīʿīte Buwayhids, while the Fāṭimid Caliph Ḥākim was ruling powerfully and absolutely. He was naturally prompted to do something that would castigate the Fāṭimids and restore his own prestige, at least in the eyes of his own subjects. So he gathered some Sunnīte and Shīʿīte divines, and under pressure made them sign a Manifesto[2] at

(1) Ivanow, *Alleged Founder of Ismāʿīlism* (Bombay 1946), pp. 7-8.
(2) The text of the Baghdad Manifesto in Abul-Fida, *Annales Muslimica*, III, pp. 15-17; its translation in Mamour, *Polemics*, p. 25.

ON THE GENEALOGY OF FATIMID CALIPHS

The ancestry of Fāṭimid Caliphs has so far confounded students of history, due to divergent accounts given by their supporters and adversaries, to myths which developed round the persons of the Hidden Imāms through *suggestio falsi* and *suppressio veri*, and more particularly to the secrecy with which the Fāṭimids themselves shrouded their genealogy. The widespread ʿAbbāsid propaganda against Fāṭimid anti-Caliphs, the hostile and sectarian attitude of Sunnīte and Shīʿīte authors and historians as well as the intriguing silence of even the Fāṭimid Daʿwat makes it difficult for us to decide one way or the other about the legitimacy of their claim, and especially about the names and details of their supposed or real ancestors. Because of his immunity from prejudice or prepossession on this particular subject, historical research might have accepted Ibn Khaldūn's opinion on the legitimacy of the Fāṭimid claim, had there been sufficient data and evidence about individual Imāms.

Though the Fāṭimids were always vehement in claiming descent from Fāṭima, daughter of the Prophet, lack of effort on their part at tracing their genealogy was taken by some as a proof of the falsity of their claim. Even when they were at the height of power and so-called reasons for precaution and persecution did not exist, no attempt was made to lay bare, even before their own secret organization of Daʿwat, facts about their ancestors, save vague claims and esoteric names. It is therefore rightly asked : Why did the Fāṭimid Caliph-Imāms never publish their genealogy, and never counteract the widespread propaganda carried on by their enemies, except by asserting their Fāṭimid origin ?

There is, however, the third question. Was al-Mahdī a legally appointed Imām ? Even if he was not an imposter, did he receive the official "NAṢṢ", or permanent appointment required to confirm the Imāmate ?

The question is not given a direct answer, but according to al-Khaṭṭāb al-Ḥajūrī when al-Mahdī died, it was not his own son who succeeded him, but the son of his cousin, ʿAlī. This suggests that al-Mahdī served as a substitute for his cousin and that the succession remained in the family of the cousin, ʿAlī.

Because this newly discovered manuscript contains a confidential letter, sent by al-Mahdī himself to the leaders of the movement in al-Yaman, the record seems to be an important one. As it is very possible that the manuscript is a true copy of a book written by the great Dāʿī of al-Yaman, and as it presents such an unexpected new idea, it deserves further study. Scholars interested in the enigma of the Fāṭimid genealogy will appreciate the following article and will wish to join in thanking Dr. Hamdānī for placing the contents of the manuscript in historical perspective.

Bayard Dodge

have always taken it for granted that the other division acknowledged Ismāʿīl as the heir to the Imāmate. The Fāṭimid Caliphs of Egypt were the most brilliant members of this branch of the Shīʿite Imamate.

The manuscript discovered by Dr. Hamdānī raises three questions. In the first place, was the ancestor of the Fāṭimids really Ismāʿīl or was he his elder brother named ʿAbd-Allāh? In the second place, did al-Mahdī belong to the family of the Prophet, or of Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ ? In the third place, was al-Mahdī a legally appointed Imām, or was he a "double" who masqueraded as the Imām when the true heir unexpectedly died ?

The manuscript answers the first question by asserting that it was not Ismāʿīl but ʿAbd-Allāh, who was appointed by Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, the Sixth Imām, to be his heir. It answers the second question by explaining that al-Mahdī was a descendant of the Prophet and a cousin to the man who during his generation was heir to the Imāmate.

One of the Fāṭimid scholars has included an interesting record in the 34th Majlis of *al-Majālis al-Mustanṣirīyah*, page 143. The record was about al-Mahdī's guardian, who was probably Muḥammad Abū al-Shalaghlagh. "Each one of his own sons whom he appointed to the Imāmate died, so that not one child was left to this guardian. Accordingly, al-Ḥasan ibn-Nūḥ ibn-Ḥawshib, the Dāʿī through whom Allāh had opened up al-Yaman, made a mantle upon which he wrote the name of the Imām al-Mahdī ʿAbd-Allāh, may God bless him, and he sent it to the guardian whose children had died, and who gave it to the Imām al-Mahdī."

The quotation confirms the information given by the the Yemenite author al-Khaṭṭāb al-Hamdānī, and makes it evident that the Fāṭimids believed that al-Mahdī was substituted for his cousin ʿAlī.

FOREWORD

The study contained in this publication is based on a manuscript, which is preserved in the Muḥammadī Hamdānī Collection, and which has been brought to light and edited by Dr. Ḥusayn F. al-Hamdānī. Before reading Dr. al-Hamdānī's article, it will be helpful to review a few of the facts which explain its contents. First of all there is the sequence of the Shīʿite Imāms arranged according to the information, which Dr. al-Hamdānī is making available:

ᶜALI IBN ABI TALIB married to Fātimah
AL-HASAN and AL-HUSAYN, sons of ᶜAlī
ᶜALI B. AL-HUSAYN
MUHAMMAD AL-BAQIR
JAᶜFAR AL-SADIQ

MUSA AL-KAZIM followed by the rest of the Twelve Shiʿite Imams	ISMAIL (ᶜAbd-Allāh) MUHAMMAD (al-maktūm) ʿABD-ALLAH (al-Raḍi) AHMAD (al-Wafī)

MUHAMMAD (Abu al-Shalaghlagh)	HUSAYN (Muḥammad)
ᶜALI, who died prematurely	AL-MAHDI, founder of the Fātimid Dynasty, who was called ᶜAbd-Allāh and ᶜUbayd-Allāh, but whose real name was Saᶜid.
AL-QA'IM, the second Fātimid Caliph.	

Needless to say, when the Imām Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq died, the Shīᶜite community split into two main divisions, one of which acknowledged Mūsā al-Kāzim as the successor. Historians

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